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UNCLAS HARARE 002454

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/PD, AF/S, AF/RA, AF/PDPA  
NSC FOR JENDAYI FRAZER  
LONDON FOR GURNEY  
PARIS FOR NEARY  
NAIROBI FOR PFLAUMER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PHUM PREL KPAO ZI

SUBJECT: ZIMBABWEAN GOVERNMENT BANS RETURN OF ITS OWN

CITIZENS

- ¶1. On November 8 government-owned media reported that the Government of Zimbabwe (GOZ) has imposed travel bans and visa requirements on a variety of people. Among those affected are British government officials, members of the British Parliament, an American human rights activist, and journalists. In a strange and disturbing twist, several of the journalists reported banned from entering Zimbabwe are Zimbabwean citizens.
- ¶2. The travel ban falls most heavily on about 70 members of the British government and parliament. One American, John Prendergast of the International Crisis Group, and one Dutch citizen, Lodewijk Bouwens of Radio Netherlands, are also listed as banned. More broadly, all British citizens are now required to apply for a visa (either at a Zimbabwean embassy or at the port of arrival) for entry into Zimbabwe. Before this announcement, British citizens were permitted to enter Zimbabwe without a visa. These moves appear to be in retaliation for the just-announced requirement that visas will be required of all Zimbabweans wishing to travel to the UK.
- ¶3. Most disturbing is the inclusion of eight Zimbabwean journalists on the list of persons prohibited from entering Zimbabwe. The eight are all in London working for Short Wave Radio Africa, an independent station broadcasting Zimbabwe-specific programming. According to the press report, the banned journalists are John Matinde, Gerry Jackson, Georgina Godwin, Simon Parkinson, Mandisa Mundawara, Violet Gonda, Tererai Karimakwenda and Graeme Counsel. If the press report of the banning order is true, the Government of Zimbabwe has made 8 of its citizens stateless.

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